

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 359 635

EA 025 071

AUTHOR Stedman, James B.
TITLE America 2000: The President's Education Strategy. CRS
Report for Congress.
INSTITUTION Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Congressional
Research Service.
REPORT NO CRS-91-430-EPW
PUB DATE 17 May 91
NOTE 18p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Assessment; *Educational Change;
Educational Improvement; *Educational Innovation;
*Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary
Education; *Federal Aid; Federal Government;
Government Role; *Policy Formation; School
Restructuring
IDENTIFIERS *America 2000

ABSTRACT

America 2000, the national strategy proposed in 1991 by the Bush Administration to achieve six national education goals that were adopted in 1990 by President Bush and the Nation's Governors, consists of four broad components: the reform of current schools; the development of new school models; the enhancement of workers' skills; and the coalescing of communities behind the President's strategy. This report provides an overview of the strategy; describes the roles, as delineated in the strategy, to be played by different levels of government, the business community, and the public; presents a table showing the Administration's proposed fiscal year 1992 funding for initiatives related to the strategy; and concludes with an analysis of some issues relevant to federal policy making. The issues include the approach to reform, research and development, coverage of the goals, promotion of school choice, and development of new model schools. (LMI)

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91-430 EPW

CRS Report for Congress

AMERICA 2000: The President's Education Strategy

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May 17, 1991



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ED359635

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AMERICA 2000: THE PRESIDENT'S EDUCATION STRATEGY

SUMMARY

The President has announced a new strategy, *AMERICA 2000*, for achieving the national education goals he and the Nation's Governors adopted in 1990. This strategy has four components:

- reform of existing schools through such initiatives as expanded school choice, voluntary national examinations, report cards on educational performance at all levels, and development of new standards for student performance;
- development with business sector support of **New American Schools**, which would be model schools created without concern for the current constraints that affect the structure and content of schooling;
- establishment of skill standards for the workforce and administration of diagnostic assessments to enhance workers' current skills; and
- designation of at least 535 communities as *AMERICA 2000* Communities, selected because they embrace the education strategy and commit themselves to supporting a New American School.

The U.S. Secretary of Education has requested that *AMERICA 2000* be supported by \$690 million originally requested in the FY 1992 budget for a series of educational excellence initiatives. An additional \$170 million was included in the original FY 1992 budget request for **Presidential Achievement Scholarships**, which have since become part of the new education strategy. Additional FY 1991 and FY 1992 appropriated funds are likely to be directed to the strategy, as well.

Certain aspects of the strategy are of particular importance for Federal policymaking. Among these key features is the strategy's approach to reform--standard setting, assessment of progress toward these standards, public reporting of that progress, and rewards for making substantial progress. Many of the relevant activities outlined in the strategy are already ongoing, under the aegis of such groups as the National Education Goals Panel established by the President and Nation's Governors to measure progress toward the six national education goals, and the National Assessment Governing Board which oversees the National Assessment of Educational Progress and is establishing performance thresholds for the national assessments. The strategy promotes a number of controversial measures for achieving educational reform, principally that of school choice involving public and private schools. Responsibility for promoting and financing the strategy appears to be divided among the private business sector, the States, and the Federal Government.

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AMERICA 2000: THE PRESIDENT'S EDUCATION STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

On April 18, 1991, President Bush proposed a national strategy to achieve the six education goals he and the Governors adopted in early 1990.¹ This strategy, entitled *AMERICA 2000*, has four broad components: the reform of current schools; the development of new school models; the enhancement of workers' skills; and the coalescing of communities behind the President's strategy.

This report provides an overview of the strategy;² describes the roles, as delineated in the strategy, to be played by different levels of government, the business community, and the public; presents a table showing the Administration's proposed FY 1992 funding for initiatives related to the strategy; and concludes with an analysis of some issues relevant to Federal policymaking.

¹These six goals are discussed in U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. *National Education Goals: Where Are We Now?* CRS Report for Congress No. 90-169 EPW, by James B. Stedman, et al. Washington, 1990.

²The term *strategy* is applied to *AMERICA 2000* because it constitutes an apparent plan of action to achieve the six national education goals. This description is based primarily on *AMERICA 2000: An Education Strategy* published by the U.S. Department of Education (undated), and a fact sheet released by the White House Office of the Press Secretary on Apr. 18, 1991. The concluding table and FY 1992 funding levels provided in parentheses through this report are based primarily on a letter and accompanying material submitted by the U.S. Secretary of Education to the Appropriations Committees, Apr. 23, 1991. For those aspects of the strategy requiring new legislative authority, the Administration is submitting legislative language to the Congress in late May.

THE FOUR COMPONENTS

"For Today's Students: Better and More Accountable Schools"

For this component of the strategy, the President is proposing a 15-part "accountability package" that includes, among other actions, the following:

- The President and the Governors, through the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP),³ will define **New World Standards** to be achieved by students in five core subject areas--English, mathematics, science, history, and geography (an unspecified portion of \$12.4 million requested for FY 1992 would be devoted to defining the standards).
- A voluntary, national system of **American Achievement Tests** will be established through NEGP, to foster efforts to meet the New World Standards and to ensure that students are ready for higher education or work when they leave secondary school (\$5 million requested for FY 1992 to prepare interim tests; an unspecified portion of \$12.4 million requested for FY 1992 would be directed to designing the American Achievement Tests).⁴
- High school students who perform well on the American Achievement Tests will be awarded **Presidential Citations for Educational Excellence** (an unspecified portion of \$3.3 million requested for FY 1992 for this activity). Until these tests are available, the strategy proposes that the examinations of the Advanced Placement Program be utilized.⁵

³NEGP was established under an agreement between the President and the Nation's Governors in July 1990. The overall tasks assigned the Panel are "determining the indicators used to measure the national education goals and . . . reporting progress toward their achievement." An annual report on progress toward achievement of the national education goals will be issued by the Panel each year on the anniversary of the Charlottesville summit (Sept. 27-28) held in 1989 at which the President and Nation's Governors met to discuss education. This report will focus on measuring each State's performance relative to the national goals.

⁴Higher education institutions will be encouraged to use results from the American Achievement Tests in making admissions decisions. Employers will also be encouraged to use these results in hiring decisions.

⁵This program of the College Entrance Examination Board is administered through the Educational Testing Service. Its examinations permit high school students to receive advanced placement in college and college credit.

- Upon the approval of the Congress, needy college students meeting high achievement standards will be awarded **Presidential Achievement Scholarships** (\$170 million requested for FY 1992).
- The strategy calls for the issuance of report cards measuring the academic performance of schools, school districts, States, and the Nation. NEGP will have responsibility for these State and National report cards (an additional \$2 million requested for FY 1992 to assist NEGP; an unspecified portion of \$3.3 million requested for FY 1992 for this activity).
- Congressional authority will be sought for regular State-level administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in each of the five core subject areas.⁶ In addition, the Congress will be asked to authorize voluntary district and school use of NAEP tests.⁷
- At least three efforts are being proposed to offer parents a choice of their children's schools. Congress will be asked to (1) authorize an **Education Certificate Program Support Fund**, which will provide incentive grants to local school districts with programs enhancing parental choice (\$200 million requested for FY 1992); (2) authorize **National School Choice Demonstration Projects** to support choice programs selected nationally (\$30 million requested for FY 1992); and (3) amend the chapter 1 program (compensatory education for disadvantaged students) to permit this assistance to "follow the child" to his or her new school, presumably in ways that are more extensive than is currently permitted.
- To foster school-based decisionmaking, the President will seek congressional and State action to increase local flexibility under Federal and State programs.
- To reward increased academic achievement, congressional authorization will be sought for a **Merit Schools Program** to reward

⁶NAEP is a federally financed assessment of elementary and secondary school students' academic achievement. These tests are administered to a sample of students at various ages (9, 13, 17) and grade levels (4th, 8th, and 12th). They are conducted biennially in different subjects on a national level. NAEP is currently engaged in trial voluntary **State-level** assessments, authorized by the Congress for 1990 in mathematics for the 8th grade, and for 1992 in mathematics for 4th and 8th grades and in reading for the 4th grade. For further details, see U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service *National Assessment of Educational Progress: Background and Status*. CRS Report for Congress No. 91-232 EPW, Paul Irwin, et al. Washington, 1991.

⁷The NAEP authorizing provisions for the trial State assessments currently prohibit such use of NAEP test items.

individual schools making "significant progress" in achieving the national goals (\$100 million requested for FY 1992), and grants to school districts demonstrating "significant gains" in achievement (appears to be focused on math and science achievement) (\$40 million requested for FY 1992).

- **Governors' Academies for School Leaders** in every State, supported by Federal seed money (at least \$12.5 million requested for FY 1992), will assist principals and other administrators in improving their schools and in being more accountable for outcomes.
- To improve teaching, the **Governors' Academies for Teachers** in every State, also supported by Federal seed money (at least \$40 million requested for FY 1992), to serve teachers in the five core subject areas; (2) different levels of teacher pay for those performing well, teaching the core subject, teaching under difficult circumstances, or mentoring new teachers; (3) congressionally authorized grants to States and districts for alternative certification programs for teachers and principals (\$25 million requested for FY 1992); and (4) **Presidential Awards for Excellence in Education** to outstanding teachers of the core subjects.

"For Tomorrow's Students: A New Generation of American Schools"

The President is proposing that a privately financed **New American Schools Development Corporation** support three to seven research and development teams beginning in 1992 for the development of model New American Schools. These schools are to be measured against the New World Standards, and developed without concern for traditional assumptions about the structure and function of schooling or the constraints currently applied to schools. Further, they are to cost no more than current schools to operate. Business and other parts of the private sector will be asked to donate between \$150 and \$200 million to the Development Corporation. The research and development teams will aid communities in seeking to implement these model schools.

The strategy calls for the establishment of more than 535 such schools, at least one per congressional district, in *AMERICA 2000* Communities by 1996. These communities, selected by the Governors and the Secretary of Education, aided by an advisory panel, will receive \$1 million each in Federal start-up funding to support such activities as staff training and the purchase of instructional materials. Congress will be asked to appropriate a total of \$550 million over 4 years to provide these funds (\$180 million requested for FY 1992).

The Secretary of Education, in consultation with the President's Science Advisor and the Director of the National Science Foundation, is to convene a group of experts to determine how the New American Schools can be linked through electronic networks (**America On Line**) to educational expertise,

information, research, and instructional materials (\$5 million requested for FY 1992).

"For the Rest of Us (Yesterday's Students/Today's Work Force): A Nation of Students"

This component of the strategy is focused on enhancing the skills of the American workforce. To that end, the President has placed the Secretaries of Labor and Education in charge of developing voluntary skill standards for all industries, and designing **skill certificates** based on those standards. Presumably, these certificates will serve to identify individuals who have met specific standards (\$2 million requested for FY 1992 to test workplace literacy skills). The work of the Department of Labor's Commission on Work-Based Learning and Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) will aid in this effort. **Skill clinics** will be encouraged in every large community and workplace. These clinics will assess workers' skills and make referrals to places where training can be provided. Spearheading this effort will be a governmentwide program to upgrade skills at the Federal level. This will be administered by the director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

Further, the strategy calls for performance standards, and accountability based on those standards, for all adult education programs receiving Federal assistance. The National Adult Literacy Survey will be expanded to provide information regularly on adult literacy linked to the skill areas identified by SCANS (\$1.1 million requested for FY 1992). The strategy commits the Administration to working with the Congress and the Governors for the enactment of "sound literacy and adult education legislation."

Finally, the strategy announces a **National Conference on Education for Adult Americans** to support a national effort to improve education and training services provided to adults (\$10 million requested for FY 1992 for adult literacy activities, including the conference).

"Communities Where Learning Can Happen"

As has already been noted, the President asks communities to become *AMERICA 2000* Communities by adopting the six national education goals, designing ways to meet them, developing a report card on progress toward the goals, and agreeing to create and support a New American School. The Governors will be responsible for designating communities; the Administration will promote these communities through attention and rewards, focusing on their creation where there are concentrations of at-risk children; and the Domestic Policy Council's Empowerment Task Force, assisted by the National Governors' Association and others at the State and local levels, will work to increase program flexibility, streamline eligibility decisions, and promote better integration of services. Further, the strategy calls for a focusing on improving: adult behavior, the sense of responsibility for children, family and community values.

ROLES TO BE PLAYED IN IMPLEMENTATION

The strategy describes the roles that will be played at various levels. **The President and the Administration** will work to promote the strategy, identifying where it is having difficulties and where it is succeeding, and rewarding progress. **The Congress** is called upon to enact the *AMERICA 2000 Excellence in Education Act*. Every Member of Congress is requested to press for State and local changes to facilitate the strategy, encourage *AMERICA 2000* Communities, and act as mentors to them. **Governors** are to shoulder the various responsibilities delineated above. **The business community** is to provide resources as the initial impetus for the research and development teams for the New American Schools, utilize the American Achievement Tests in its hiring decisions, create skill standards and act on them, and generally provide additional resources and people as needed. **The general public** in communities across the country are called upon to support the strategy. **Parents** are specifically denoted as critical to the success of this effort.

REQUESTED FY 1992 FEDERAL FUNDING

The table below is based primarily on U.S. Department of Education (ED) material submitted to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. It should be stressed that these are the **additional** amounts being requested for FY 1992; it appears that other ED funding will be devoted to the strategy, as well. For example, ED recently canceled two grant competitions so that their FY 1991 appropriated funds could be redirected to supporting the strategy.⁸ The entries in this table total \$860 million. ED has asked the Appropriations Committees to redirect \$690 million to the strategy; these funds were originally requested for various educational excellence initiatives. The remaining \$170 million is for the Presidential Achievement Scholarships originally requested in the FY 1992 budget and, since then, included in *AMERICA 2000*. Initiatives are generally listed in the table in the order in which they appear in the April 18, 1991 documents concerning *AMERICA 2000*; several were not included in those documents and are so designated below. Finally, ED identified 11 initiatives that it states will require **new authorizing legislation for implementation**; those are bolded in the table below.

⁸*Federal Register*. May 2, 1991. p. 20199.

**TABLE 1. FY 1992 Appropriations Requested
for AMERICA 2000**

Initiative	FY 1992 Request (in millions of dollars)
New World Standards in core subjects; American Achievement Tests	\$12.4*
Interim American Achievement Tests	5.0
Presidential Achievement Scholarships	170.0**
National Report Cards	2.0
Education Certificate Program Support Fund	200.0
National School Choice Demonstration	30.0
Merit Schools Program	100.0
Districts Demonstrating Math and Science Achievement Gains	40.0
Governors' Academies for School Leaders	12.5
Governors' Academies for Teachers	40.0
Alternative Certification	25.0
New American Schools	180.0
America On-Line	5.0
Testing Workplace Literacy Skills	2.0
National Adult Literacy Survey	1.1
National Conference on Education for Adult Americans and related activities	10.0
Commission on Time, Study, Learning, and Teaching***	1.0
Endowment Building for Historically Black Colleges***	10.0
Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching***	10.7
Program Administration****	3.3
TOTAL	\$860.0

* Unspecified portion of the funding for each activity.

** Discussed in Apr. 18, 1991 documents on *AMERICA 2000* but not identified in the Secretary's correspondence with the Appropriations Committees. The amount shown was requested in the FY 1992 budget.

*** These activities not identified as part of *AMERICA 2000* in the Apr. 18, 1991 documents.

**** This will cover salaries and expenses related to supporting NEGP, Presidential Citations for Educational Excellence, information dissemination concerning *AMERICA 2000*, and establishing a skills clinic in ED.

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AMERICA 2000 AND FEDERAL POLICYMAKING

AMERICA 2000 raises a number of issues for Federal policymaking. This concluding section provides a brief analysis of only **some** of the issues raised by selected aspects of the strategy:

- approach to reform;
- research and development;
- coverage of the goals;
- promotion of school choice; and
- development of new model schools.

Approach to Reform--Standards, Assessment, Reporting, Awards

One of the strategy's primary means of reforming the current educational system is its approach combining the setting of performance standards; assessing status on, and progress toward, those standards; reporting publicly on such progress; and providing incentive awards for making progress.

Of particular interest currently to policymakers is the assessment of performance on a national basis and the reporting of that performance. The strategy provides that student performance on voluntary American Achievement Tests will form the cornerstone of the *AMERICA 2000* effort. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) will continue and, if approved by Congress, be available for performance assessment of districts and schools. Among the issues that arise regarding national assessment are the following:

- How will a consensus be reached about what it is our children should know by the time they graduate from high school?
- Under this system, will localities have flexibility to choose some of their own standards, determine how best to assess progress toward those standards, and design different approaches to accomplishment of those standards? If not, then what will *AMERICA 2000* Communities be permitted to do regarding their reform efforts?
- Will this lead to a national curriculum, and what are the consequences of such a development?
- Will teachers "teach to the test" and is that desirable?
- What will happen to students, schools, districts, and States failing to achieve the standards, and will they be assisted in meeting the standards?

- Are available tests adequate to the task and, if not, what will it take to prepare the appropriate tests?

As noted, a key element is the reporting of performance. The strategy calls for report cards on student achievement that will be used to assess the performance of schools, districts, States, and the Nation. For national reporting of State-by-State results, the strategy looks to NEGP for its annual reports. At a minimum, there is no consensus in the Congress regarding reliance on NEGP for this activity. As of the date of this report, the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee has reported legislation (S. 2) that would establish a separate national panel to report on progress toward the goals. Congressional action has been prompted by concern about, among other elements, the absence of educators on NEGP, the lack of voting congressional representatives on the NEGP, the lack of congressional involvement in the selection of NEGP members, and the possibility that any three NEGP members could veto any of its actions.

This overall approach to reform reflects some of the current school reform efforts already being undertaken throughout the country in States such as South Carolina and at the national level, as well. A substantial national effort involving elements of this approach **predates** the President's strategy. With regard to standard setting, the President and the Governors set six national education goals in 1990; legislation in 1988 extending the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 charged the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) with establishing "achievement goals" for the different grade levels, age levels, and subject areas tested by NAEP.⁹ NEGP is already required to identify the indicators that will measure status on the goals, report progress of each State toward achievement of the goals on an annual basis, and consider changes to national and international assessments of educational performance.

Research and Development

Basic research and development to undergird the strategy--in particular, the creation of the New American Schools--will be supported by the private sector through the privately financed New American Schools Development Corporation. As noted, business and other parts of the private sector will be asked to donate between \$150 and \$200 million for the work of this new corporation. Of particular interest for Federal policymakers is the relationship between this privately financed research and development effort and ED's current array of research and development activities. These latter activities include support of national education research and development centers, field-initiated studies, education research grants, and regional education laboratories. The **total** estimated level of support being called for on behalf of the Development Corporation over the next several years is substantial given that the **annual** appropriation available to ED Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) for research is \$64.7 million (for FY 1991).

⁹Augustus F. Hawkins-Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988 (P.L. 100-297).

Among the questions raised regarding the strategy's research and development effort are the following:

- Will ED's current research efforts be directed to implementing *AMERICA 2000* to the extent permitted by law?
- Will the Development Corporation begin to assume responsibility for research and development that would otherwise have been carried out by OERI?
- Will Federal support for OERI's research activities diminish in light of work by the Development Corporation?
- Will the private sector actually provide the estimated level of support being assumed in the President's education strategy?
- Will the Development Corporation's research effort have to meet the same requirements that would apply to research efforts undertaken with Federal funds through OERI, such as selection through a peer review system or nondiscrimination in administration of funds?
- What assurance is there that the research and development teams created by the Development Corporation will not concentrate their efforts on developing model schools appropriate to one sector (public or private) and not the other?
- Will the recipients of Development Corporation funding be eligible for other funding available through activities undertaken in this strategy?
- How will the models developed by the Development Corporation be disseminated through the country, particularly to districts that might not be in *AMERICA 2000* Communities?
- How will the efforts of the Development Corporation interact, if at all, with the current reform projects being undertaken throughout the country, such as TheodoreSizer's Coalition of Essential Schools or James Comer's School Development Program?¹⁰
- What will the relationship be between the Development Corporation's research and development teams and the *AMERICA 2000* Communities? Can these communities implement educational reform that has not been explored by the research and development teams?

¹⁰For more details on these projects, see Comer James S. Educating Poor Minority Children. *Scientific American*, Nov. 1988; andSizer, Theodore R. Diverse Practice, Shared Ideas: The Essential School. Reprint of Chapter 1 of *Organizing for Learning: Toward the 21st Century*. National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1989.

Coverage of the Goals

Although potentially affecting each of the goals, the strategy is not **specifically and directly** addressed to each. Goals with relatively little attention in the strategy include those addressing readiness for school, and the creation of drug-free and violence-free school environments. Some may argue that action by the 101st Congress relating to drug education and to early childhood education constitutes adequate responses to those two goals.¹¹ Nevertheless, *AMERICA 2000* does not appear to integrate these goals fully into the activities that are being promoted under the strategy. An additional issue centers on the absence of any focused attention in the strategy on postsecondary education or vocational education. It might be argued that the focus on enhancing workplace skills will necessarily involve vocational education. Coupled with the lack of attention to school readiness, key facets of the education pipeline (early childhood education through postsecondary education) may not be addressed by the activities undertaken in response to the President's strategy.

School Choice

The strategy proposes school choice as a method for improving current schools. Choice is a controversial approach to educational reform and improvement.¹² Choice, in general, raises questions concerning, among other issues:

- What impact will choice have on the racial and socioeconomic makeup of schools? What steps will be followed to assure that all students benefit from the provision of choice?
- What will be the educational experiences of students "left behind" in less successful institutions if their parents do not exercise their choice option?
- Will adequate information be provided to parents to affect their choices of schools?
- What impact will choice have on the academic achievement of students and on the improvement of schools?

¹¹U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. *National Education Goals: Major Legislation Considered by the 101st Congress*. CRS Report for Congress No. 90-555 EPW, by Wayne Riddle, *et al.* Washington, 1990.

¹²U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. *Public School Choice: Recent Developments and Analysis of Issues*. CRS Report for Congress No. 89-219 EPW, by Wayne Clifton Riddle and James B. Stedman. Washington, 1989.

What may particularly spark debate over the choice efforts embraced by *AMERICA 2000* is their possible inclusion of **private** schools. Issues that arise with the participation of private schools include the following:

- What impact will choice plans involving private schools have on the financial resources available to public school systems?
- If it financed student attendance at sectarian institutions, would such a plan be acceptable under the U.S. Constitution?

New American Schools

Under the strategy, the Development Corporation will finance research on a number of model New American Schools that will, in turn, may be looked to by the *AMERICA 2000* Communities as they work to establish such a school or engage in systemic reform. Of importance for Federal policymaking is the instruction in the strategy that these schools be developed with achievement of the New World Standards in the five core subject areas as their objective and without attention to constraints that affect today's schools. This and other aspects of this effort raise a number of questions:

- Will the New American Schools have to be open to all students, regardless of racial and ethnic background, socioeconomic background, academic ability, or handicapping condition?
- Will the curriculum offered in these schools have to meet certain standards and contain certain content? Will there be curriculum content that these schools **cannot** provide to their students if supported with Federal funds, such as religious instruction?
- Will these be public or private schools? How will the day to day operation of these schools be financed?
- Will *AMERICA 2000* Communities have to provide evidence that their plan to implement a New American School was fully and openly debated within the community, and that its implementation is supported by a majority of community members or affected persons?
- Given that some *AMERICA 2000* Communities apparently are to begin their work **before** the Development Corporation will have models to share, what will constitute a New American School in these communities? Will existing reform efforts simply be given a new label?